

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 233. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1873.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

### CHAPTER I. BY WAY OF PROLOGUE.

ABOVE and on either side the chancel arch of our village church—an edifice of exceeding antiquity—certain decorations in fresco had been long, long ago ruthlessly smeared over and shrouded with white-wash. The churchwardens of that period, it seemed, had pronounced against ecclesiastical art as a vain, idolatrous, and altogether abominable pursuit. Time, however, had fought upon the side of the fresco. Its veil had been rent in many places; had peeled off in flakes or fallen in clouds, shedding a sort of hair-powder, gratuitously, upon the congregated heads below; something of the original work could certainly be discerned. No distinct or coherent design perhaps; but here were patches of clouded crimson or dull blue; there gleams as of dead gold leaf; in sundry places, suspicions of shape and outline, with surely now and then spectral faces, indistinct of feature and vacant of expression, peering through the haze and struggling to assert their existence. The fresco still survived, if, like a paralytic, with limited force and deficient faculties. To wandering eyes or flagging attention during sermon time, or the less interesting incidents of our village service—which had indisputably its moments of irksomeness—the picture was an irresistible object of contemplation. I am only narrating of myself; then a child of tender years imprisoned in a high pew and encompassed with hard hassocks, plucked at or pushed by admonitory hands whenever excess of restlessness afflicted me, or my mental vagrancy became too obvious an outrage

upon decorum; but I am sure I may also speak on behalf of others. That nebulous fresco in its own dim way, if given power of discourse, would have much to say as to the gapings and blinkings, the staring and studying it has provoked among generations of remiss and drowsy worshippers. And our maltreated mural painting had this merit about it: the more one looked at it, the more one perceived in it, or thought one perceived in it. The cruel coat of whitewash it had been constrained to wear was in this respect a positive gain. Fancy came eagerly in aid of its short-comings. Our thoughts pieced out its imperfections. There were moments—sometimes during the service, but more often in the course of the sermon—when the whole design seemed clearly disclosed to me. The whitewash was altogether gone. The colours were bright and fresh, the drawing manifest, and the artist's intention in all its integrity, patent and demonstrated beyond all gainsaying. Heaven had opened; and in a flood of light and a glory of prismatic hues, saints and martyrs in holy congress, and benign angels in resplendent groups, stood forth fully revealed. A moment, and then—upon the nudge of a warning elbow, or the lunge of a sharp-rimmed prayer-book, administered by reproving authority—the vision vanished. All was as before, only less intelligible. Fancy had been deposed and driven away; the whitewash was again supreme. The task of interpreting the fresco had to be undertaken entirely anew.

The little boy, whose early church-going was thus faulty and reprehensible, time has thrust far from me into the distant past. Years and years have sundered us and changed us so that our identification is now as a thing almost incredible. To

me that child now appears not myself but another; his character and conduct matters in which I have no concern. At least, I feel myself at liberty to discuss, and, if need be, condemn them in the plainest terms. It may be, however, that our disunion is less absolute than it seems to be, or than I am myself fully conscious of. Age appears alien to its own youth; dissimilar and distinct in aspect as in every other way. Yet the time when the twain parted company, when the child ceased and the man began, is so hard to fix, that doubt upon the question becomes unavoidable. Some subtle imperceptible filaments linking them together may ever remain: a leaven of the child affecting the man, or some embryonic element of age possessing influence even in extreme youth.

At least, if I resemble in nothing else the boy studying the whitewashed fresco, I am like him in that I am now studying, with much of his desire, to comprehend and interpret a large, confused, and partially lost or hidden picture. I mean the past. I desire to render it intelligible if I can, and to relate concerning it. Just now all seems vague and vast, remote and incoherent. The sun may presently break forth, however; and abate, if not wholly dispel, the obscurity. Or, possibly, fancy may assist me when fact falls short. It is indispensable, indeed, in such a case, that conjecture should now and then be permitted, when more worthy evidence is not forthcoming. In a story, or what purports to be a story, it is not to be supposed that all the witnesses are upon oath, or that all the circumstances stated are capable of being formally and legally proved.

So much by way of prologue.

#### CHAPTER II. "CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME."

I WAS Childe Roland, and Overbury Hall was my Dark Tower.

Not that I was a very knightly person: a slim, swarthy, undersized boy of some ten or twelve years, perhaps. Not that it was a particularly romantic-looking place; a stiff, square, stone building, with sham battlements and numberless windows, of the Manchester warehouse or county infirmary order of architecture, built in George the Third's reign after the total destruction by fire of the old hall—a real hall which Inigo Jones had designed. But I was of the age and the humour to be fascinated by it; and, accordingly, it fascinated me.

A child with a lively faith in fays, giants, enchanted castles, and other of the established possessions of fable, readily finds stimulants to his belief, easily feeds his appetite for the mystic and marvellous. He is in his own eyes a knight-errant, his hazel switch a falchion, his infantile attire a suit of burnished mail; deeds of chivalric prowess are to him matters of most easy accomplishment. Fiercely lashing a bed of stinging nettles, he believes himself the vanquisher of a mighty Paynim host. He invents his adventures, and counts himself a hero on the score of supposititious achievements. Perhaps it is not children only who do this, however.

And there was something to be said for Overbury Hall. Its existence was a sort of secret. Though you climbed the highest eminence of the neighbourhood—Beacon Mount for instance—you could catch no glimpse of the hall, not even of its chimney-tops. But if you stole up a very dark twisting avenue; the moss on the roadway deadening the sound of your footfalls, the crowded gnarled boughs above stooping down to knock your cap off, or pluck you by the hair, the shrubberies whispering wickedly together as you passed, taunting, threatening you, hissing out your name even; if you had nerve to accomplish thus much, you came suddenly upon the great house as though by magic. It barred your progress and confronted you in the most massive and imposing fashion. Though you had sallied forth on purpose to find it, and would have gone home disappointed if you had failed in your quest, it was quite a shock when you did find it, even though you had come upon it in the same way a score of times before.

It not only lay in the hollow of the park, unwrapped and buried by huge and thickly congregated trees; but it was also dead, stone dead. Its eyes—by which I mean its windows—were fast closed and boarded up. No breath of life, in the shape of smoke, ever issued from its chimneys. Birds built their nests in every nook of its façade; rabbits frisked about its front door-steps, as though they were dancing on its gravestone. Lord Overbury had long been absent from England. His estates, heavily encumbered, were said to be vested in trustees for the benefit of his creditors. Meantime, the hall was tenantless. It was certainly a most corpse-like place, mouldy and mildewed, with thick green slime upon its walls and an odorous atmosphere about it as from a

newly opened sepulchre. A lake washed one side of it, a standing pool, black and sedgy, that never seemed to catch glimpses of blue sky or reflections of heaven's light. Sombre trees bent over it as though meditating suicide, and beneath, in the dark shadows of their boughs, reptiles croaked, and water-rats plunged, and wild fowl, rustling among the rushes, uttered strange cries of warning or of suffering, awful to listen to.

Nominally, the hall was under the charge of old Thacker, a superannuated gardener, and his wife, who received a small stipend just sufficient to keep them out of the Union, in return for the services they rendered, or were supposed to render. They lived in one of the park lodges, a quarter of a mile or so from the great house. I don't think they ever went any nearer to it, or indeed troubled themselves at all about it. Mrs. Thacker was always busy, either in boiling cabbages, or in hanging out ragged clothes to dry upon the tumble-down palings of the park. Old Thacker, when he wasn't staring at his pig—his "peg," he called it—was invariably hurrying to or from the Barley Mow public-house, "up street," Purrington. I should have said that he was either hurrying thither, or loitering back; in the latter case, his nose, which was of a bulbous pattern, was usually very red, and the flavour of strong liquors much affected his exhalations.

Apart from the fascinations I have described, Overbury Hall had other charms for me. I had clearly no business within its boundaries, and it was situate at a distance of some three miles from my home. In visiting it, therefore, a journey and the commission of a trespass were involved; enhancing the attractive venture-someness of approaching the Dark Tower at all.

One morning I had stolen unharmed up the mysterious avenue and found myself close upon the great building; it lay across my path like a recumbent giant of granite. All was still, save that the leaves were muttering as ever, clouds of rooks were sailing away overhead, cawing discordantly as they darkened the sky, and some wild creature my steps had disturbed was making its way with a furtive rustle through the long rank grass; otherwise, all seemed as usual. I was quite alone, and the Dark Tower was within a few paces of me.

Suddenly I perceived a certain change in the aspect of the dead hall. It was not much, yet it was something; and, under

all the circumstances of the case, something remarkable, decidedly. One of the many eyes of the corpse had opened! From a window on the ground floor the shutters had been removed. It was black, whereas all the others were white, or whity-brown. Clearly, in my character of Childe Roland, I was bound to see what this change portended.

I was, as I have said, of low stature, and the window was some few feet from the ground. Still, it was easy, by mounting on the projecting ridge of rusticated stone that marked the base of the house, and grasping the window-sill, to draw myself up to the desired elevation. A pause, perhaps of longer duration than was quite worthy of a valiant knight-errant, for reflection and the summoning of sufficient breath and nerve, and then—I had climbed to the window and was looking in.

For some moments, flattening my nose against the cold glass, I could distinguish nothing but the reflection of my own face, and even that was not very clear. Stay, was it my own face, I asked myself? Surely it was larger, redder, older, fatter. I hadn't such staring black, blood-shot eyes, so spongy-looking a nose, such a grinning mouth. If I was looking in, some other person was looking out, and but a window pane hindered the absolute contact of our features!

Then came a shout and a burst of noisy laughter. The window was flung up, and before I had time to descend and escape, I found myself seized by the collar of my jacket and drawn headlong into one of the lower rooms of Overbury Hall. I was roughly treated, but I was not hurt. A strong pair of arms held me aloft swinging in the air for a few seconds, and then I was dropped on the floor. I came down on my feet with a sound of hob-nailed boots clattering on bare boards. I staggered a little, but I didn't fall.

"Don't be frightened," said a hoarse rough voice.

"I'm not frightened." It was not strictly true; but of course a Childe Roland could not confess to the sensation of fear.

Then the air of the room seemed full of laughter again; of laughter and tobacco smoke. I began to laugh myself and to cough, for the smoke was dense and pungent.

I was a child; but I knew that mirth was a sort of guarantee of safety, or at any rate of immunity from punishment.

## CHAPTER III. MY ADVENTURE.

THE room was small, and barely furnished. A fire burnt in the grate, and on the hob a little brass kettle was steaming. A bottle and a tumbler stood on the table, and soon I perceived that, in addition to the tobacco smoke, the fragrance of hot rum-and-water pervaded the air of the chamber.

I found myself in the presence of a man, rather untidily than shabbily dressed. He wore a swallow-tailed, claret-coloured coat, with basket buttons, a figured blue satin waistcoat, and drab trousers buttoned at the ankle. His frilled shirt was fastened by a brooch, and a white cravat was loosely twisted round his neck. But he had the tumbled appearance of a man who had slept in his clothes. He wore rings upon his fingers, but his hands were so dingy and hairy that they looked like the paws of some animal. His wristbands were creased and soiled into a pattern of dirty circles.

As to his face, I could only think of it in relation to an old engraving I knew of, hanging in one of the attics at home, and representing a satyr bending over the sleeping form of a nymph.

The man had just the look of that satyr; the protruding lower jaw, the thick lips, the broad, crooked, depressed nose, the low corrugated forehead, the strong lines running from the nostrils towards the corners of the mouth; there were even tufts of hair that stood erect upon his temples, and did duty for horns. I could not help glancing towards his lower limbs, half expecting to find him possessed of the crooked legs of his kind. It was with some disappointment that my eyes lighted upon his drab trousers. I consoled myself with reflecting that they might nevertheless encase goat-like legs.

"Where do you come from?" he demanded, closing one of his eyes, as though he could in that way see me better; I was so small. But the action imparted a most satyr-like expression of winking to his face. His bristling eyebrows lowered, but his mouth was still laughing.

"From the Down Farm," I answered.

"The Down Farm? Out beyond Purington? Why, that's Hugh Orme's land, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"And he farms that water meadow in the valley, don't he? and the arable and pasture stretching out beyond towards the Steepleborough road? To be sure he does. I remember now. Are you his son?"

"No, he's my uncle."

"Your uncle, eh? And so you come here bird's-nesting, or snaring rabbits, or what not?"

"I didn't mean to do any harm," I said, not quite in a Childe Roland tone.

"Well, I don't know that there's much harm done," he observed, with a gruff laugh.

"Here, have a drink." He held out a steaming tumbler to me. I tasted its contents.

"Do you like it?"

"Not much," I answered, coughing. "It's too fiery." Then fearing lest I had given offence by my frankness of speech, I added, "I dare say I should like it better if I was bigger."

He laughed very much at this, and I laughed too with a vague notion that my remark was more funny or clever than it really seemed to me to be. And then I thought the satyr's laughing a good sign, and that it behoved me as much as possible to encourage his mirth.

"You're quite a young shaver," he said, presently. "Take a pinch of snuff." And he held out a large gold box to me.

I took a pinch, terribly afraid, however, that he designed to snap the lid suddenly, and catch my fingers. But he didn't do that. Of course I sneezed very much. And the more I sneezed the more the satyr seemed amused.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Duke," I said.

I had been christened Marmaduke, but from a general feeling that it was inconveniently lengthy for the ordinary purposes of life, the name had been cut down to one syllable. "Duke" had about it a certain savour of the peerage, and, therefore, in my position, of false pretence, which was distasteful to me. Still I preferred it to Marmaduke, which had entailed upon me various disadvantages, including personal conflicts with such of the village boys as thought it humorous to accost me as "Marmalade"—a liberty I had felt bound to resent. Painful results, in the way of a bruised face and abraded knuckles, had ensued; but I endured them patiently enough, and even with a sort of pleasure, as evidences of my valour and victory. I must own that my correction of my satirists and contemners would have been less complete if our head carter, Jim Truckle, had not, whip in hand, come to my aid at a critical moment of the proceedings.



"Duke, eh?" repeated the satyr. "A recent creation, evidently."

I knew beforehand that he would make a joke about it. Everybody did. But I could not join in his laugh this time. I felt that it was too much at my expense. And to tell the truth I did not clearly comprehend his joke.

"But Duke what?" he asked presently. "You're Duke of Something or Somebody, I suppose?"

"Duke Nightingale," I said.

"Nightingale, eh?" and he rubbed his dirty hand across his low red forehead, with a look as though he were trying to recollect something. He did not speak again for some minutes. Then he suddenly inquired, "Mother living? At the Down Farm? Hugh Orme's sister?"

I answered all these questions in the affirmative.

"To be sure," he said; and then he grew silent and thoughtful again. "What, were you born in these parts?" he began to question me anew, after a long pause.

"Yes," I said.

"So far as you know, I suppose, you mean. Ever been to London?"

"Never."

He stared at me very hard indeed. "Nightingale!" he muttered, musingly. Then he drained his glass, and proceeded to mix himself another, pouring hot water from the little kettle on the hob. "I suppose you won't smoke a pipe with me?" he asked.

I said that if he had no objection I thought I would very much rather not.

He filled and lighted his own pipe, and soon enveloped himself in a thick cloud of smoke, through which, however, I could perceive his bloodshot, protruding, black eyes still staring at me.

"Do you go to school?" he next inquired.

"No. Mother teaches me. And Mr. Bygrave, the curate. He comes over to the farm twice a week from Purrington. I get my lessons and exercises done ready for him when he comes."

"And to-day you're playing truant?"

"No, to-day isn't one of his days."

"So, Bygrave's the curate, is he? What's become of old Gascoigne, then? Dead?"

Mr. Gascoigne was our rector. I explained that he was still living, but was now very old and infirm, and had, of late, been assisted by a curate, Mr. Bygrave. But the satyr did not seem to be listening

to me. He was muttering "Nightingale!" over and over again.

Suddenly he rose, and opened a door opposite to the fireplace. It led into a large dark, oak-panelled room. I learned afterwards that it was the library of the hall.

"Come here," said the satyr, and I followed him into the room. I could see nothing at first, but he unfastened the shutters of one of the windows and allowed a broad shaft of dusty light to dart through the clouded panes.

There was a large, faded, ragged Turkey carpet upon the floor, a heavy carved table with a thick nap of dust and fluff upon its surface in the centre, and standing straggling apart from each other, as though declining all intercourse or association, a few high-backed chairs covered with worn velvet of a dim green hue. I perceived no books anywhere, and the furniture seemed very scanty in proportion to the vast size of the room. I could scarcely see to its further end, it was so distant and the light so feeble; but the whole aspect of the place was dismantled and neglected.

"Look at that," said the satyr, and he pointed to a picture in a broad gold frame that hung above the mantelpiece of yellow marble, on the front of which was carved in bold relief the coat-of-arms, supporters, and legend of the house of Overbury.

The picture, clearly a portrait, represented a tall, slender gentleman attired in robes of crimson velvet trimmed with ermine. He wore white silk stockings, and a heavy chain of gold hung round his neck; he was leaning against a richly draped table upon which were many books and scrolls of paper, and a highly ornate inkstand, well supplied with feathery-looking pens. One white hand rested upon the table, the other—very taper as to the fingers, and these adorned with filbert-shaped nails—gathered together the folds of his robe as though the better to exhibit the slim symmetry of his legs. He was of pale complexion, with brown hair clustering in curls low down upon his forehead. His eyes wore a bright surprised look, and his red lips were curved into a most amiable smile. Behind him there was a fluted column, with flapping curtains in some way suspended from its capital by gilded cords and tassels. In the extreme distance was painted a dim landscape backed by purple hills, over which lowered lurid clouds very billowy in form.

I looked at this picture for some time; it was to me an impressive work, and the

gentleman it portrayed seemed somehow to have fixed his gleaming eyes upon me; as I moved his glance followed me; he even appeared to raise himself on tip-toe the better to view me. The satyr, I noticed—he had brought his smoking tumbler with him, and was holding it with both hands, as though to warm them—did not look at the picture at all; all the time I was looking at it he was looking intently at me.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked, at length.

"Very grand," I said. "The most beautiful picture I ever saw." To tell the truth I had seen very few pictures. I merely desired to convey my great and genuine admiration of the work, and I could find no other way of expressing myself.

"Do you think it's like?"

"Like who?" I inquired, innocently.

"Why, like me," said the satyr, with a noisy laugh.

"No," I answered, with a start; for it had never once occurred to me that the picture was meant to be a portrait of him.

"Not a bit?"

"No; not a bit."

"Why, what's wrong about it? Why isn't it like? Come, let's have your opinion."

"Well," I said with an effort—yet as he pressed me I felt compelled to speak—"I think it's too good-looking."

He roared with laughter at this, and cried again and again, "Too good-looking, eh! That's your opinion is it? Too good-looking, eh?"

I thought, perhaps, I had been candid overmuch. "I don't say that you're not good-looking, you know," I observed.

"But do you think it, you young Jesuit, you? Honestly?"

"Well, no, honestly, I don't." For I was brought to bay; but he only laughed. He was a wonderful satyr for laughing.

"It was meant for me, however. I sat for it. Years ago though, now; and a lot of money was paid for it. A chap up in London painted it."

He looked at me curiously as he spoke, and seemed to wait for me to answer. I simply said, "Oh, did he!" not having any other kind of observation ready.

"But as you say, it's not a bit like, and the man that painted it was a fool." I had not said that, by-the-bye, nor anything like it. I greatly admired the picture, although not as a portrait of the satyr, certainly. "It's better looking, although it's a white-faced, sickly, simpering idiot all the same. Let's

see whether a glass of hot grog will bring any colour into his face."

As he spoke he flung the contents of his tumbler at the picture. There was a smoking wet patch upon the canvas; the gentleman still smiled and looked at me, although he seemed to be shedding very hot and copious tears.

"It's improved him, by the Lord," cried the satyr. "He's so far like me, then. Real navy rum, hot, does him good. Come away, shaver; this room's enough to give one the horrors."

As I followed him out I took one parting glance at the picture. Then for the first time I saw, or thought I saw, that the gentleman's features bore some faint resemblance to the satyr's; but they were so much more refined, the face so much more smooth of surface and delicate of colour, that the likeness, I decided, could never have been a very striking one. However, the satyr, young, and slim, and clean, if he had ever been so, might have looked something as that picture looked. Except the smile. I held it impossible that the satyr could ever have smiled like that. He could only laugh—he could never have done anything else—and exhibit to the utmost advantage his abundant supply of large, yellow, tusk-like teeth.

"Well, shaver, you've seen something, and now I'm going to have a nap, and you'd better cut home. What time do you dine?"

"At two o'clock."

"Ah, then you'll be late unless you run all the way. Shake hands."

I shook hands with him. There was a chink of money about our performance of the operation. Three sovereigns were slid from his palm into mine.

"For me?" I said; "oh, thank you, sir." I was nearly saying satyr.

"For you, and don't spend it all in rum or tobacco, or such like. A little snuff, as you seem fond of it, I wouldn't so much object to. But be a good boy and mind your books, and always tell the truth and try and be a comfort to your uncle and mother, and generally behave yourself properly, and do all that sort of thing. It's so long since I've said anything of that kind that I'm not quite sure of the correct text; but I'm pretty sure it comes near to what I was saying. It was gabbled over to me often enough when I was your age, and perhaps it's been gabbled over to a good many more in the same case, and I dare say a deal of good it's done the lot of us. Don't be

a prig, or a sneak, or a fool, if you can help it. Learn your Church Catechism and take a few lessons in boxing, if you get a chance. They always come in handy at some time or another. Snare a few rabbits now and then if you like, or fish in the lake, only don't fall into it, because there's not many here to pull you out. And now, God bless you; cut your lucky."

Thereupon he lifted me up, and rather threw me out of the window than helped me to climb out in my own way. I alighted on my feet, however, and as I hurried down the dark avenue I could hear his loud, harsh laugh sounding after me, and echoing among the dense plantations on either side of me.

### FAMOUS BRITISH REGIMENTS.

#### THE FIFTIETH ("THE DIRTY HALF HUNDRED").

WHY certain regiments, formed of casual collections of men of various ages, nationalities, and districts, should from the very first enrolment acquire a special name for obstinate courage, tenacious bravery, and almost reckless eagerness for the onslaught, it is difficult to say. The original stock, depend upon it, was good, and the officers who first moulded the new material excellent soldiers. The standard once raised to a certain height, the pride of the regiment is to keep up that standard; the tough jobs are given the corps to achieve; the posts of honour awarded it; it is let slip at the most critical moments; in a word, its career soon commences, and the path of glory, red with brave men's blood, but lined with ever-green laurels, lies before it.

The nicknames of regiments afford a subject of great interest, and there are often quaint and memorable stories about how they acquired them. The gallant Fiftieth derives its sobriquet, however, rather from an accident in dress than from any of its numerous exploits. It was called the Dirty Half Hundred in the Peninsula from the sombre black cuffs and collars of the regimentals, or, as some writers on these subjects assert, from the badly fixed black dye working off upon the men's faces when they wiped them with their cuffs during the sweat of battle. The regiment, after its return from Abercromby's expedition to Egypt, was for some time called the Blind Half Hundred, as nearly all the men suffered from ophthalmia, and this is still rather a sore subject with the famous Half Hundred.

As the Dirty Half Hundred the regiment will flourish, we hope, for ever. Whenever the Springers (Sixty-sixth); the Pot Hooks (Seventy-seventh); the Old Fogs (Eighty-seventh); the Old Five-and-Threepennies (Fifty-third); the Lacedemonians (Forty-sixth); the Orange Lilies (Thirty-fifth); the Saucy Greens (Thirty-sixth); the Green Linnets (Thirtyninth); the Light Bobs (Forty-third); the Two Fours (Forty-fourth); the Old Stubborns (Forty-fifth); the Die Hards (Fifty-seventh); the Steel Backs (Fifty-eighth); and the Saucy Sixth, are called to the battle, the Dirty Half Hundred will never be slow to follow.

The services of the Fiftieth in Egypt, and against Junot at Vimiera, we have no room to here recapitulate; but we will start with them from Corunna, where they covered themselves with glory. Lord William Bentinck's brigade (Fourth, Fiftieth, and Forty-second regiments), on the right of the British line, fell in on the morning of January the 16th, 1809. Just before the advance, the wife of an Irish soldier of the Eightieth, with a baby in her arms, was sent in by Marshal Soult. She had lain in on the march, and been kindly attended by the French doctors. The marshal sent his compliments by her, and that he should soon wait on the Fiftieth. The ensigns of the Fiftieth, Moore and Stewart, unfurling the colours by order of the brave Major Napier, who, in allusion to Soult's message, said, with generous enthusiasm, "Open the colours that they may see the Fiftieth;" and the men remained with ordered arms loaded, as quietly as in a barrack-yard, awaiting the attack. One shot from the French battery entered the earth at the very toes of the right centre company. The men drew away in a semicircle, the captain then called "Dress," and the men dressed up to the yet twirling shot. At this moment the French light infantry approached briskly, and wounded some of the Fiftieth, who were standing like a wall near the encampment; the whole brigade then received the word "Forward," and advanced firing and charging with the bayonet. The Fiftieth pursued the French light troops, meeting the enemy's heavy columns in the village of Elvina, which stood in the valley between the two armies. A severe struggle then ensued, the dead and wounded of the English and French falling on each other, so close was the fighting. Here Major Stanhope, of the Fiftieth, fell dead,

and the two ensigns, Moore and Stuart, were mortally wounded, so, also, was Lieutenant Wilson, who had been in extraordinary spirits all the morning, and had dressed himself daintily in a new suit of regimentals "to meet Master Soult," as he playfully expressed it.

When the Fiftieth regiment rushed down from their camp in pursuit—says Captain Macarthy, of the Fiftieth—an officer, seeing the church on an eminence over the turn of the road, and supposing it to contain a body of the enemy in ambush, and beholding, also, the French rapidly filling the lane close by, considered it necessary to oppose them, and prevent the probability of their turning their fire on the rear of the Fiftieth regiment when the latter had passed. He, therefore, extending his arms, stopped several of his men, and having arranged them at the corner of the church, himself entered the building, which, however, was empty; but the priest's house, between the church and the lane, was full of French soldiers. The officer came out, ran round, and rejoined his men, who, being screened by the angle of the church, kept up a brisk fire upon the enemy in the lane, and several times cleared the opening. A French officer, rather below the middle stature, stick in hand, exerted himself most gallantly to supply the gap; on which his men laid their firelocks, and killed two, and wounded three of this little band; but fortunately the British officer had picked up a dragoon carbine on the road near Corunna, which he retained as "a friend in need." This he had previously loaded with two small buttons from the collar of his regimental coat, and having been supplied with French cartridges in the church, he was able to assist his men by discharging his carbine many times in defence of his post; and the French officer at the gap, seeming resolved to force his way at the head of his men, the dragoon carbine, rested against the corner of the church, insured an aim which for ever checked his progress, and his men drew back. "The defenders of the church," with their officer, immediately made a dash at the priest's house, the enemy—upwards of twenty—within it, rushed out; but not being able to reach the gap, turned suddenly round, and instead of cutting off the church party, fled into the house, shut the door, and fired at random out of the windows, which afforded the church party an opportunity of retiring from their hazardous attempt.

Before the Fiftieth advanced, while standing under the cannonade, the balls at first went about a foot or two over their heads, and the men stooped, or, as it is called by soldiers, ducked. Standing in front, Napier said, laughing, "Don't duck, the ball has passed before you hear the whiz." The ducking, however, was continued by all but one little fellow, who stood erect, and Napier said to him aloud, "You are a little fellow, but the tallest man in the Fiftieth to-day for all that; come to me after the battle, and you shall be a sergeant." Every one heard Napier, yet, strange to say, no one afterwards knew who the soldier was, nor could his name be learned. It is supposed he fell, and the agitation of the moment had made others forget or not notice him.

Even a closer view of the doings of the Fiftieth in this battle is given us by Sir Charles Napier in an extraordinary graphic piece of autobiography. As a fragment of a soldier's life, it stands unrivalled.

Speaking of a temporary check of the Fiftieth, Napier says: "This misery shook us all a good deal, and made me so wild as to cry and stamp with rage, feeling a sort of despair at seeing the soldiers not come on. I sent Turner, Harrison, and Patterson, the three officers with me, to bring them on, and they found Stanhope animating the men, but not knowing what to do, and calling out 'Good God, where is Napier?' When Turner told him I was in front, and raging for them to come on for an attack on the battery, he gave a shout, and called on the men to follow him, but ere taking a dozen strides cried out, 'Oh, my God!' and fell dead, shot through the heart. Turner and a sergeant, who had been also sent back, then returned to me, saying they could not get a man to follow them up the lane. Hearing this, I got on the wall, waving my sword and my hat at the same time, and calling out to the men behind among the rocks; but the fire was so loud, none heard me, though the lane was scarcely a hundred yards long. No fire was drawn upon me by this, for a French captain afterwards told me he and others prevented their men firing at me; he did not know, nor was he told by me, who it was, but he said, 'Instead of firing at him, I longed to run forwards and embrace that brave officer.' My own companions called out to jump down or I should be killed; I thought so too, but was so mad as to care little what happened to me."

Soon after Napier was taken prisoner,



entangled in one of the deep lanes. "The Frenchmen," he says, "had halted, but now run on to us, and just as my spring and shout was made the wounded leg failed, and I felt a stab in the back; it gave me no pain, but felt cold, and threw me on my face. Turning to rise, I saw the man who had stabbed me making a second thrust, whereupon, letting go my sabre, I caught his bayonet by the socket, turned the thrust, and, raising myself by the exertion, grasped his firelock with both hands, thus, in mortal struggle, regaining my feet. His companions had now come up, and I heard the dying cries of the four men with me, who were all bayoneted instantly. We had been attacked from behind by men not before seen, as we stood with our backs to a doorway, out of which must have rushed several men, for we were all stabbed in an instant, before the two parties coming up the road reached us. They did so, however, just as my struggle with the man who had wounded me was begun. That was a contest for life, and, being the strongest, I forced him between myself and his comrades, who appeared to be the men whose lives I had saved when they pretended to be dead on our advance through the village. They struck me with their muskets clubbed, and bruised me much, whereupon, seeing no help near, and being overpowered by numbers, and in great pain from my wounded leg, I called out 'Je me rend!' remembering the expression correctly from an old story of a fat officer, whose name, being James, called out 'Jemmy Round.' Finding they had no disposition to spare me, I kept hold of the musket, vigorously defending myself with the body of the little Italian who had first wounded me, but soon grew faint, or rather tired. At that moment a tall dark man came up, seized the end of the musket with his left hand, whirled his brass-hilted sabre round, and struck me a powerful blow on the head, which was bare, for my cocked-hat had fallen off.

"Expecting the blow would finish me, I had stooped my head in hopes it might fall on my back, or at least on the thickest part of the head and not on the left temple. So far I succeeded, for it fell exactly on the top, cutting into the bone, but not through it. Fire sparkled from my eyes; I fell on my knees, blinded, yet without quite losing my senses, and holding still on to the musket. Recovering in a moment, I regained my legs, and saw a florid, handsome young French drummer holding the

arm of the dark Italian, who was in the act of repeating his blow. We had not proceeded far up the old lane, when we met a soldier of the Fiftieth walking down at a rapid pace; he instantly halted, recovered his arms and cocked his piece, looking fiercely at us to make out what it was. My recollection is that he levelled at a man, and I threw up his musket, calling out, 'For God's sake don't fire, I am a prisoner, badly wounded, and can't help you. Surrender.' 'For why should I surrender?' he cried aloud, with the deepest of all Irish brogues. 'Because there are at least twenty men upon you.' There were five or six with us at the time. 'Well, if I must surrender—there!' said he, dashing down his firelock across their legs and making them jump. 'There's my firelock for yez.' Then coming close up he threw his arm round me, and giving Guibert a push that sent him and one or two more against the wall, shouted out, 'Stand away, ye bloody spalpeens, I'll carry him myself, bad luck to the whole of yez.'

"My expectation was to see them fall upon him, but this John Hennessy was a strong and fierce man, and moreover looked bigger than he was, for he stood upon the higher ground. Apparently they thought him an awkward fellow to deal with; he seemed willing to go with me, and they let him have his own way."

The Fiftieth had already expended seventy rounds of ammunition, and collected all they could from their fallen comrades and the enemy, and being too far advanced to receive a further supply, were obliged to retire to a terrace above the church, facing outwards parallel to the lane. Here they kept the French at bay, sustained a heavy fire, and prepared to hold their own with the bayonet, not a single cartridge being left. They knelt for some time, till many of the men were shot through the head, then lay down, anxiously waiting for ammunition. Towards dusk the Guards advanced, halted on some land above the Fiftieth, and called out that they were come to relieve them. The Rifles were all this time sharply engaged in front. The Fiftieth in this brave struggle lost four officers, while five were severely wounded. The loss of rank and file was very severe.

To prevent a recurrence of events described in former articles, we propose to concentrate our reader's attention chiefly on two or three of the exploits of the Fiftieth, rather than glance briefly over all.

At the siege of Badajoz, one of the most gallant leaders of the storming party was Captain Macarthy, of the Fiftieth. To this gallant volunteer was intrusted the management of the scaling ladders at the storming of the castle. The hilarity of the officers and soldiers beforehand was remarkable; the officers and men packing up their portmanteaus and packs to leave safe in the encampment for their return; the men laughing and fixing the best flints in their muskets, and all forming in column eager for the assault at eight P.M. Picton at last pulled out his watch, and said to the Third Division:

"It is time, gentlemen, to go. Some persons are of opinion that the attack on the castle will not succeed, but I will forfeit my life if it does not."

Macarthy was chosen by Major Burgoyne to lead the party, and on one occasion when he fancied he had missed his way, Picton declared he was blind, and drawing his sword, swore he would cut him down. But all went well, and Picton was appeased when he reached the first parallel, where the division had to enter the trench. "Down with the palings!" And the men rocked and tore down the palisades in the fosse, and the division poured in. "Up with the ladders!" was the next cry, and seizing the ladders they pulled and pushed them up the mound. With difficulty five ladders were placed against the mound, which was swept by round shot, broken shells, and bundles of cartridges. At that moment four ladders with troops broke near the upper ends, and fell. From the remaining ladder a private soldier, attempting to get over the wall, was shot in the head as he looked over the parapet, but the next instant another sprang over. Macarthy at once cried out, "Huzza! there is one over—follow him." More ladders were then placed, and Macarthy cheered the men, to encourage the Fourth and Light Divisions at the other breaches. Macarthy had just rearranged the ladders, when his right thigh was fractured by a ball, and he fell on a man who had dropped by his side. Macarthy then requested a field officer to desire some of his men to carry him out of the stream of fire. A soldier came up and took him up on his back, but was obliged to drop him in even a more exposed place. A bugler, just then as he mounted the wall, sounded the "Advance!" and was killed in the act of cheering on his comrades.

"I remained," says Macarthy, "where

the soldiers were obliged to drop me, at the base of the mound, amidst expiring brother sufferers. During the night the moans, prayers, cries, and exclamations of the wounded fully expressed the degrees of their agonies in the varieties of sentences and cadence of tone, from the highest pitch in the treble to the lowest note in bass. Some of the wounded were, undoubtedly, raving mad, violently, vociferating dreadful imprecations and denunciations; others calling incessantly 'Water, water!' 'Bearers! bearers!' some singing; many shouting the numbers of their regiments (as 'Oh, Forty-fifth!' 'Oh, Seventy-fourth!' 'Oh, Seventy-seventh!') to attract their comrades to their aid. Many of the fallen heroes received additional wounds during the night. One man sat on my left side rocking to and fro, with his hands across his stomach; in the morning he was dead, stretched on his back, and bleeding out of three wounds in his head, from shots he subsequently received there; his head rested heavily on my hand, which I had not the power to withdraw. . . While here an officer of the Eighty-third regiment, without his hat, came staggering behind me, and, on approaching, inquired how I was hurt, said he was wounded in the head, and that he would stay by me for mutual consolation, and sat down; but as my spasms were extremely severe, and regular as the pulse, I had no interval for conversation. He left me, and placed himself with his back against the palisades, near the opening on which the enemy's shots continued to rattle. I saw him in the same position at daybreak, but knew not if he was alive or dead. Two other men, whom I requested to remove me, were also obliged to set me down, unfortunately at the base of the mound, with my fractured limb placed upwards on the bank, so that I could only support myself by placing my hands behind to prop me in a sitting position, in which I remained immovable till late in the afternoon of the next day, amongst numerous brother sufferers."

Almarez is another crimson word blazoned on the banners of the Fiftieth. This, too, in which the whole regiment joined, was a most gallant enterprise. Almarez was an important fort half-way between Badajoz and Madrid. Its Fort Napoleon was strongly fortified with a double ditch, armed with eighteen twenty-four pounders, and connected by a floating bridge with a battery of six guns on the

opposite side of the river. The garrison was numerous, the stores plentiful, and they were in full communication with the great arsenal at Seville.

Lieutenant-General Sir Rowland Hill issued orders for his first brigade to storm Fort Napoleon on the 18th of May, 1812. The second brigade was to make a false attack on the front of the castle, which is situated on the peak of a sugar-loaf mountain, at the side of a pass on the main road from Truxillo. The first brigade (Fiftieth, Seventy-first, and Ninety-second regiments) worked round the valley by the base of the mountains, through winding sheep-walks in the brushwood, which were considered impassable. The march was so tedious that the Fiftieth regiment and the left wing of the Seventy-first were not able to reach the fort till six A.M. on the 19th, when the sun was in full shine. They therefore lay down in ambush not to be seen from the battlements. Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart of the Fiftieth, in command of the brigade, then obtained leave to make a rush at Fort Napoleon without firing a shot. The men were especially ordered to not even load their muskets till they were under the walls, and not to waste time in giving more "than a few inches of bayonet," as a compliment in passing, to any Frenchman.

The soldiers ran on in three divisions, and advanced through a sweeping and tremendous fire, preceded by the men bearing the ladders. The bearers of one ladder were all struck down, but the ladder was at once caught up and carried on by their comrades. The ladders proved rather short, and exposed the escaladers to a rapid fire while scrambling over the parapet. Captain Candler, of the Fiftieth, leading his company first up the ladder, was pierced by several balls, and fell dead inside the fort. The Fiftieth, growing impatient at the crowded ladders, crawled up by breaks in the wall, and pulled up their eager comrades, who had laid down in the inner ditch, till all were gathered, and then dashed forward gallantly, led by Colonel Stewart. In vain the French twenty-four pounders poured in showers of grape and round-shot; the enemy had soon to fly from the fort to the bridge that led to the opposite battery, cutting the bridge as they fled, thus leaving their friends helpless in the rough hands of the Fiftieth. The deserted French, forced back again into the fort, were bayoneted chiefly in the gateway, where the fighting was furious.

In half an hour the Fiftieth and their allies had taken Fort Napoleon and its garrison of three thousand resolute men. The governor, furious at the English success, became almost mad, refused to surrender his sword, and flourishing it in defiance, attempted to strike an officer of the Fiftieth, upon which an angry sergeant wounded the governor with his pike, to the great regret of the English officers. The wounded man died during his removal to Merida. In the fort was a French artillery officer's wife, dressed half like a man in a pelisse, travelling cap, and Turkish trousers. She was protected, and restored to her husband by Captain Stapleton of the Fiftieth. Fort Napoleon was by this daring exploit entirely destroyed, and the important pass of Almaraz thrown open. The Fiftieth lost in this fine achievement one officer and twenty-six rank and file killed, one captain, three lieutenants, three ensigns, five sergeants, and eighty-seven rank and file wounded.

In the Sikh war the Fiftieth won great honour. At Moodkee, twenty-two miles from Ferozepore, the Fiftieth first tried their bayonets on the Sikhs, who attacked our advanced guard vigorously, but were repulsed, and driven back three miles, with the loss of many a turban, and seventeen pieces of cannon. The British troops then pushed on to Ferozepore, and joined Sir John Littler. The united forces now advanced somewhat rashly on the Sikh entrenchments, which were garnished with one hundred and eight guns, more than forty of them of battering calibre. The Sikh camp was a parallelogram, enclosing the village of Ferozeshah, the shorter sides looking towards the Sutlej and Moodkee, the longer towards Ferozepore and the open country. This last face we attacked. It was a dead flat, covered here and there with thick jungle, and dotted with sandy hillocks. The English had sixteen thousand seven hundred men present, and sixty-nine guns, the Sikhs from forty-eight thousand to sixty thousand men. Sir Hugh Gough led the right wing, and Sir Henry Hardinge the left. The line advanced, with the artillery in the centre, through a tremendous fire, which our lighter artillery could check, but not silence. In the face of this the Fiftieth and their colleagues carried the batteries, but were unable to defeat the Sikh infantry, although Sir H. Smith captured part of the position, and even the Third Light Dragoons charged and took some batteries. Nightfall left the Sikhs still masters of half the great fortified quadrangle,

and there our troops bivouacked, interrupted by firing, and exhausted by fighting and thirst. Many of the Sikhs, clad in chain armour, and wrapped up in their quilted ragilas, which a bayonet would scarcely penetrate, lay about the tents and guns, shamming dead, and in many cases sprang up, cut down the sleeping English, and retook the cannon. The Sepoys, afraid of the Sikhs, fought badly. In the night a heavy gun had to be captured, and whenever moonlight discovered our position, the enemy's fire reopened, dismounting our pieces, and blowing up our tumbrils. In the morning, however, the English awoke fresh, and soon settled the affair. Ferozeshah was taken, and the camp turned. Two hours after Tej Singh came from Ferozepore, with a new army, and made two desperate efforts to regain the position. It was time to win, for the gun ammunition was entirely expended, and our cavalry was exhausted. Luckily for us, Tej Singh had enough of it first, and abandoned the field. We had taken seventy-three pieces of Sikh cannon, and were at last victorious.

The battle of Aliwal was a great field-day for the Fiftieth, and seldom have English bayonets had harder work to pierce Oriental coats of mail. In January, 1846, Sir Henry Smith, then near Hurrekee, marched to join Colonel Godby, who was somewhat hemmed in by the Sikhs near Loodianah. Colonel Wheeler's brigade, consisting of the Fiftieth, Forty-seventh, and Forty-sixth regiments, joined him on the 25th of January, and after a few days' rest, a united attack was planned for the 28th. The Sikh force consisted of twenty-four thousand men and sixty-eight guns, many of them officered by French artillerymen. Sir H. Smith led twelve thousand men, and thirty-two guns. The hostile Sikhs held a very strong position, their rear resting on the river, their flanks well entrenched. The heart of their position was the village of Villeewull, and another post, almost equally important, was the village of Aliwal, which gave its name to the battle in which it suffered so severely. The enemy, nothing loth, hurried forward to meet us on a ridge of which Aliwal was the centre. Our infantry columns deployed into line upon open hard grass-land, good for fighting. Sir H. Smith then, to prevent being outflanked by the enemy, broke into open columns, and wheeled into line. The line advanced, with the coolness and precision of soldiers on a field-day. One hundred and fifty yards further, at ten A.M., the Sikhs opened fire fiercely.

Sir H. Smith halted the men under fire, and then resolved at once to carry the village of Aliwal, and to throw his forces on the Sikh left and centre.

The village was carried at a rush, and the enemy's cavalry thrown back on their infantry. In the mean time Brigadier Wheeler, with the Fiftieth Foot, the Forty-eighth Native Infantry, and the Simoor battalions, was charging and carrying guns, again joining his line, and moving on for fresh work with the most gallant coolness. The enemy, forced back on the left and centre, then endeavoured to cover the passage of the river, and occupied the village of Bhoondee till our lancers broke up the Sikh squares, and the Fifty-third carried the village at the point of the bayonet. The Sikh artillery rallied under the high banks of a nullah, but were again driven out, and exposed to the fire of twelve of our guns at only five hundred yards' distance. Our troops were now gradually pressing in towards the ford, to which the Sikhs were converging. The Sikhs, hemmed in, threw themselves in disordered masses into the ford and boats. Our twelve-inch howitzers played on the boats, and a great slaughter ensued. The Sikhs lost sixty-seven cannon, and forty swivel camel guns; their camp baggage, and vast stores of powder, shot, shell, and grain. In this great victory the Fiftieth lost one officer and nine men, and ten officers and fifty-nine men were wounded. In his despatch, Sir H. Smith especially eulogised the conduct of Lieutenant-Colonel Ryan, of the Fiftieth.

At Sobraon, our crowning victory, the Fiftieth hotly joined in attacking the Sikh's triple line of breastworks, flanked by redoubts on both sides the Sutlej, bristling with artillery, and manned by thirty-two regular regiments of infantry; thirty thousand Sikhs protected the bridge at Hurrekee. So hot was the fire of the Khalsa troops, that at first it seemed impossible to storm such a camp; the Sikhs contested the captured place in fierce conflict sword in hand. Our cavalry then rode into the entrenchments. Gradually the Sikh fire slackened, and the enormous army loosened and rolled down towards the Sutlej bridge, perishing by hundreds under our fire. Lieutenant Grimes, of the Fiftieth, was killed in this battle, which ended the war. Lieutenant-Colonel Bunbury, who fought at Sobraon, says that near the swivel wall pieces, the Sikhs had dug oblong holes, in which fifty men could be concealed to at-



tack the takers of the batteries unawares. The order was given to search all such holes, and bayonet the inmates.

At Alma and Inkermann the soldiers with the blue facings distinguished themselves among the bravest. In 1864 and 1865, the Fiftieth had a rough life of it in New Zealand against the rebellious and fanatical natives. They were at the assault and capture of Rangiwheia, February, 1864, and the gallant repulse of the crafty enemy's attack at Nukumarū, January, 1865. They were at the action of Kakarama, and helped to open the road to Taranaki. They also aided in the capture of the Putahi Pah. At Nukumarū, the natives had been told by the prophets that they were invulnerable, and they fought well. One daring Maori seized a soldier of the Fiftieth, and tried to drag him off bodily; but the native was sabred by one of our cavalry. The Fiftieth had some twenty men wounded. The native attack was made under cover of the smoke of some scrub in front of the camp, which General Cameron had fired to prevent surprise. Two of the Maori divisions attacked the English camp, while the third pushed forward to attack the tents. They were at last entirely routed.

#### HOPE DEFERRED.

A DREARINESS came o'er me  
Once, on a dim spring day;  
The summer on before me  
Seemed far and far away.  
Full dark had reigned the winter,  
With cloud, and mist, and gloom;  
My spirit longed to enter  
Into the fields of bloom.  
The tempest's wild repining,  
Made sorrow in my soul;  
I craved the cheerful shining  
When heavy clouds unroll.  
I saw a gleam on heather,  
Stray through a rifted cloud;  
The masses swept together,  
The winds spoke fierce and loud.  
The mist upon the mountain  
Dropped down in hopeless rain;  
Fell in a bitter fountain  
Over the grieving plain.

#### IN THE SILENT CITY.

To City men the idea of silence being connected, in any way, with the City may appear in the highest degree ridiculous. They are so used to a perpetual excitement from the time they enter it to the time they leave it; they are so infected with the everlasting bustle, the eternal jingle of money, and the unceasing roar of the worshippers of the Golden Calf, that quiet to

them would mean panic, and silence bankruptcy. City men never experience silence in the City. Its silence has been broken long before they arrive at their offices in the morning, and its hum continues long after they have left in the evening. The great cauldron of commerce is bubbling even before they commence their daily work, and it continues to simmer long after they have reached their mansions at South Kensington and Bayswater, or their suburban villas at Hampstead, Highgate, Lewisham, Camberwell, and Denmark Hill, or their river-side retreats, anywhere you please between Putney and Windsor. They know nothing whatever of the silence of the City. This knowledge is only given to night policemen, to wakeful octogenarian City housekeepers, to bank watchmen, and to housebreakers. On second thoughts, perhaps the latter class know little of it; they seldom go anywhere unless there is business to be done, and although they know that there are plenty of cribs worth cracking in the City, the whole place is so watched that it renders their be-crackment a matter of considerable difficulty as well as danger.

The present writer, who is neither a night policeman, nor a wakeful octogenarian City housekeeper, nor a bank watchman, nor a housebreaker, recently went for a tour in the silent City. He had not been to the fancy ball at the Mansion House; neither had he been banqueting with the Most Worshipful Company of Serene Stevedores; nor had he been dining with the captain of the guard at the Bank of England; nor was he on his way back from the Guards' mess at the Tower; nor had he arrived at some unreasonable hour by a tidal train at London Bridge. He had done none of these things, and yet there he was—no matter why—standing in front of the official residence of the Lord Mayor, just at that period when silence is beginning to steal over the City like a mist, and settle down on it like a dense fog—a fog which seems to muffle every voice, put india-rubber tires round all the wheels, tie up every knocker with white kid, shoe every horse with felt, and every passer-by with American goloshes.

I find I am particularly fortunate in the evening I have selected. There is no great civic festival going on, my meditations will not be broken by the clatter of a hundred carriages, the rapid conversations of a myriad of powdered footmen, and the flash of lights innumerable. A competitive examination in clock striking has just been held by the various steeples in the neigh-

bourhood. Every one has struck twelve according to its own time and its own tune; each in its turn strives to impress upon the silence that its own is the only right way of striking, and that it is the only regular and well-behaved clock in the neighbourhood. Such an impressive way have all the chimes of doing this, that when a disgracefully laggard clock, St. Tympanum-by-the-Sideboard, rings out twelve with querulous distinctness, at least a quarter of an hour late, one is firmly convinced that it must be the steadiest and most accurate time-keeper in the City of London.

Your first thought, whilst standing upon the kerb-stone of what is, in its normal condition, the busiest centre of London, is—what can possibly have become of all the omnibuses? Do they all sleep out of town as well as the City merchants and City clerks? Where, again, are all the newspaper boys? Where are the disreputable, dirty, ragged “prisoner’s friends” who always hang about the pavement when the court is sitting at the Mansion House? Is anybody left in that mysterious cell under the dock, from which the prisoner emerges like a jack-in-the-box, and to which he retires, also like a jack-in-the-box, when the chief magistrate puts the lid down with a sentence of six months’ hard labour? Is any one there, and if so, what is he thinking about? Is he determining, in his own mind, to turn over a new leaf, and so one day to become Lord Mayor of London? The clocks are commencing another competitive examination, and St. Tympanum-by-the-Sideboard, which, by the way, does not shine at all in striking the quarters, is being run hard by St. Thomas Tiddlerius, and we have no time for idle speculation; so take my arm, gentle reader, and let us cross the road. In the daytime we would not venture to do this unless we had previously insured our lives heavily in the Accidental, but now we could roll about the road, or play a game of hopscotch in it, if we forgot our dignity in the darkness and stillness of the night. Let us coast round the Bank, and dance gaily over the heaps of treasure that are buried beneath our feet. I wonder it has never occurred to some of those energetic people who are always pulling up the roadway under the excuse of gas, water, or paving, to make a secret burrow under the Bank, hoist up treasure in buckets of mud, and carry it away in mud-carts, till the Governor and Company of the Bank of England awakened some fine morning and found themselves bullionless. I protest I should

like to wander about the interior of the Bank—with no burglarious intention let it be distinctly understood—and see the Temple of the Golden Calf in its silence, when its high priests were asleep. I should like to wander through the Three per Cent office when all the books were closed, when the brisk young clerks who are so particular about signatures were asleep, and when the imbecile old ladies, with money in the funds, were dreaming of the perils they had gone through in being knocked about from beadle to clerk, and from clerk to beadle, in the pursuit of dividend; to see the Parlour with all the chairs tenantless, the entrances beadleless, and the Rotunda silent as the grave. Are there any clerks left in charge all night? If so, I take it for granted that they sleep upon mattresses of dividend warrants, and lay their heads upon pillows of crisp bank-notes. Possibly the wraith of Mr. Matthew Marshall, accompanied by a ghostly Bearer, rises now and then to haunt these unfortunate watchers with demands impossible to be satisfied. Who shall say? It is certain that few things look more inscrutable and adamant, and none less sympathetic, than the outer walls of the Bank of England in the dead of night.

Let us glance at the Grocers’ Hall as we go by—which looks like a well-endowed Dissenters’ chapel in the dim light, and as if excellent dinners and superb wines had never been consumed within its precincts—and turn down Lothbury. There is not a soul stirring besides ourselves, and the stock-brokers’ cab-stand in Bartholomew-lane is untenanted. We turn up Capel-court: there is no bellowing of bulls, nor growling of bears now; our footsteps re-echo with such startling distinctness that we turn round sharply, thinking we are being followed, and that there are other prowlers about besides ourselves. The flags themselves look so innocent of speculation and jobbery, so full of good intentions, that they might serve as paving-stones to that quarter, to which the descent, according to classical authority, is so easy. As for the portals of the Stock Exchange itself, they appear to be closed so tightly that you wonder how it will be possible for them to be opened again at the proper time to-morrow morning. “The House,” indeed, looks so serious, so dignified, so severely respectable, that it might be the Tomb of the Stocks, the sepulchre of shares, a mausoleum for bubble companies. One can hardly realise the fact that in

a dozen hours' time these doors will be everlastingly on the swing; that a roaring, frantic, anxious crowd will be tearing up and down the worn steps; and that whatever there may be within the walls of our mausoleum will be galvanised into feverish and frantic life. As we turn to leave this dismal court we hear a species of Gregorian chaunt being dismally crooned, on a fourth-rate concertina, somewhere up on the top floor. What is the meaning of this? Is there an asylum for demented jobbers in this quarter, or is it the "sweet little cherub who sits up aloft and keeps watch o'er the life of poor Stock," who is giving this melancholy performance?

We take our way to the Royal Exchange, for we would fain see what goes on here at the witching hour of night. Do the merchants of long ago troop down here after twelve o'clock and whisper spectral quotations, and conclude phantom bargains? Does the ghost of Sir Thomas Gresham perambulate the French, American, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Greek, and Dutch walks, attended by sprites in the form of gigantic grasshoppers frisking and chirruping gleefully? We pass in at the principal entrance. We notice the doorway to Lloyd's closed hard and fast, as if Lloyd were dead, and all the underwriters had gone out of town to attend his funeral, or as if Mr. Plimsoll's agitation had made the insurance of ships illegal, and Lloyd—who, by the way, is, or was, Lloyd?—has closed his establishment in despair. We peer through the ornate iron gate at the entrance to the quadrangle. The whole place is dark and deserted. There is not even a beadle to break the monotony of the view; we can just catch a glimpse of the lights in front of the Mansion House twinkling and glittering through the western gate on the other side. A cold blast comes whirling through the elaborate gates; it chills us—we walk briskly away across Cornhill and enter Change-alley. We pause beneath the shadow of Garraway's, and think how the neighbourhood must be haunted with the uneasy spirits of the mad dabblers in the South Sea Bubble. There is a light in the windows of a bank-house giving on the alley. What is going on? Are fraudulent directors cooking accounts, or is it merely a staff of hard-worked clerks "on the balance?" It is neither the one nor the other. It is simply some men whitewashing the interior of the office. You see time is so precious in the City that they cannot afford to sacrifice even a moment for cleanliness and beautification.

Hence bankers are compelled to do their work by day, and their washing by night. The whitewashers do not seem to like their job: they are depressed; they do not whistle blithely, and slap the ceiling merrily after the usual fashion of healthy whitewashers. They do their work stealthily, as if whitewashing were a capital offence, and they were afraid of being discovered every moment. We jump up and tap playfully at the window: the whitewasher starts and peers anxiously in the direction of the noise: he looks scared, and no doubt thinks he has seen the ghost of Mr. Secretary Craggs, Sir John Blunt, or any one of the wild speculators who flourished a century and a half ago. Out into Lombard-street—Lombard-street, dark, sad, and silent. There are no anxious crowds jostling one another, no doors continually on the swing, like popular gin-shops in a low neighbourhood, as happy mortals plunge wildly in to drink of the Pactolean fount; no rustle of bank-notes, no auriferous jingle of sovereigns, no pleasant song with the refrain of "Owlyeravit." This happy hunting-ground of Thomas Tiddler might just as well be the Great Desert of Sahara, for all the use it would be to me at the present moment if I wanted to get a cheque cashed. Why should banking operations be confined to the hours between nine A.M. and four P.M., and why should not bankers have a clerk for nocturnal duty, on the principle of the innkeepers, who have a porter up all night? Supposing I were to ring the bell and present a properly signed cheque, at one of these banks, is it likely that some ancient housekeeper would come down with a weird cloak thrown over her night-dress, and give me the change? I think it is far more likely that the night watchman would awake suddenly from his slumber, and that I should find myself without delay in charge of the nearest policeman.

The silence increases. We can hear distinctly the measured tread of the policeman at the other end of the street, and we feel compelled to speak in whispers, in order that he may not overhear our conversation. There is no one about, there are no roysterers and no revellers; the thunder of late trains has entirely died away, and the thunder of early ones has not commenced. In the whole length of Fenchurch-street we encounter but one person, and he is a stalwart Irish gentleman who has charge of some works in connexion with pulling up the roadway, or illuminating an ancient lantern, or keeping

a very black cutty pipe in full blast, we cannot tell exactly which. Mincing-lane, gayest and most varied of the many retreats of commerce, is the most deserted and dismal quarter we have yet visited, and we shudder as we see our faces reflected in ghostly fashion in the vast plate glasses of the office windows, as we pass by. The most curious part is that there is no sign, no vestige of the vast business conducted here, remaining. Who would ever dream of the sales of every description that are going on in this lane daily? Of rice, of sugar, of pepper, of nutmegs, of cinnamon, of tea, of coffee, of indigo, of hides, of ginger, of logwood, of shellac, of gum benjamin, of myrabolams, of nutgalls, and a hundred other articles of which particulars are given in catalogues which look like serious play-bills run to seed. Not a sign of any of these things is to be seen. We can gaze right into some of the offices, and see that they seem to be swept and cleared, as if they were going to be let to-morrow morning. The dismal passage by the Commercial Sale Rooms looks more dismal than ever, as we gaze through the iron gate and note the one lamp fitfully flickering in what appears to be the entrance to some third-rate baths. We drift into Mark-lane, and find there the silence to be even more intense; we can distinctly hear the tick of a clock within a house as we pass by. We gaze through the windows of the Corn Exchange: it looks like a bankrupt railway station, about to be converted into a literary institution. The stands seem as if they were going to be transformed into reading-desks and newspaper slopes, and there is not so much as a grain of corn to be seen anywhere on the premises. We become objects of suspicion to a policeman, who evidently thinks we want to break into the Corn Exchange: we move on, and descend a somewhat steep and tortuous lane, and find ourselves in Thames-street. Here we are in a region of cellar-flaps, which groan dismally or wheeze asthmatically, in different keys, as we pass over them. We turn our faces westward and pass the Custom House. It looks as if the freest of free trade had been established; as if all duties, inwards and outwards, were entirely abolished, and the whole building converted into one vast crèche for poor children, in which all the inmates went to bed at seven o'clock. There are no lights to be seen except in a couple of windows on the top floor. Who is this burning the midnight gas, I wonder? Is it a surveyor-general, an inspector-

general, a comptroller of accounts, a landing waiter, a searcher, or a jerquer? I have rather an idea that it must be a jerquer. I have not, of course, the least notion what a jerquer is; except that he must be something very mysterious, and, I should opine, more likely than any one else to carry on his operations at two in the morning. We meet a dilapidated chiffonier, who is grubbing about amongst the rubbish heaps, and he is evidently very much scared at finding two tolerably respectable-looking individuals on his own ground so early in the morning. We pass through Billingsgate Market, but we are too early, there is no one astir yet; but the bright light glimmering in the upper windows of a certain famous hostelry, close to the river, indicates that in an hour's time the place will be busy enough. In Darkhouse-lane we meet an individual, something between a decayed merman and a pinchbeck Diogenes, who is carrying a lantern, and talking to himself, and under the church of St. Magnus we meet a misanthropic scavenger who is talking to his horses something about "Hullywhoop." These are the only persons we encounter. And yet, in a little while, this thoroughfare will be crammed with waggons, porter will jostle porter, and each vie with the other in the depth and variety of his objurgations. There will be shouting and screaming; there will be a loading and unloading of merchandise; warehouse doors will be thrown open; shops will display their wares, and the whirr and whiz of the crane will be heard without ceasing. And yet, at the present moment, it is as quiet and deserted as the back street of a small cathedral town. There are noisome odours as of decomposed fish, of decayed fruit, and of bilge water. There is an irritating dust containing splinters of straw, which our friend the scavenger has distributed in the ardour of his occupation. Let us go up the steps on to London Bridge, and see if we can get a breath of fresh air.

Up the dirty, greasy, disreputable steps we pick our way gingerly. There we find one or two poor creatures, one or two poor women in rags, sleeping so soundly, enjoying a few hours' fitful oblivion, only to wake up and find life more wretched than ever. Tread softly, hush your voice; do not let us take away the small scrap of comfort that oblivion alone can give. The bridge is almost deserted, for the scavengers have finished their work; there are no vehicles on it, so you have every chance of crossing without seeing the proverbial



grey horse. There is a policeman on one side of the way and a young lady in a red shawl on the other, and one or two shapeless masses—it is hard to say to which sex they belong—crouch on the stone seats here and there. We find a seat that is untenanted, and we lean over the parapet, and gaze down-stream at the lights winking in the dark night, and glittering in the black river as it hurries to the sea. Far away down the Pool can we trace them; down past the Tower, through the groves of masts and the tangle of cordage, past the forest of Dockdom, the picturesque shores of Wapping, and as far as Limehouse can we see the tiny glitter of lamps, like fallen stars in the distance. Here and there we notice a red or a green light, marking the situation of some pier or station; there are no busy boats about, no fussy penny steamers to break the ceaseless swirl of the dark river as it hurries away from the silent City. There is nothing to check the monotonous rush of its onward course. Stay, what is that black mysterious boat that is hovering about, and shattering the long lines of lamp-reflections. Is it the police boat? Or is it the craft of some aquatic burglar? What is that they are towing astern? They break the silence of the night by shouting. There is some sign of life on board the Hull steamer at Fresh Wharf; there is a clanking of chains, and a faint steam issuing from her funnel; a heavy waggon has just lumbered over the bridge in the direction of the Borough Market, and a couple of cabs have clattered along in the opposite direction; there are sounds as of the shunting of carriages, and bumping of turn-tables in the Cannon-street Station. The spell is broken. Here comes an empty hansom. Let us jump into it, and drive home, for in a little while the City will be no longer silent, but will wake up to that feverish anxiety of speculation, to the everlasting fighting and struggling for so much per cent, to trade, to barter, to profit and to loss, which will last as long as Commerce lives, and until Enterprise retires from business.

#### GOOD OLD ENGLISH FARE.

At a moment when the School of Cookery is likely to become one of the most popular schools in England, it may not be unwise to ascertain the rise and origin of that peculiar theory of plain food which exercises an unquestioned supremacy over the affections

of Englishmen. It is worthy of remark that in this country the example of the more elevated ranks, so omnipotent in other questions of fashion, has entirely failed to influence the rank and file of Englishmen on the one great subject of cookery. The coarse food of our Saxon ancestors has not only survived the shock of the Norman conquest, but has, in spite of continental innovations, gained perceptible ground over "kickshaws" and "messes" during the last two centuries.

Plain roast and boiled have fought their way up in the world, and the food of the people finds favour in the sight of those whose ample means command the resources of an elaborate cuisine. This is the more remarkable, as the Normans introduced into this country a system of cookery of a very high order, and it appears strange to the antiquarian that the traditions of the Norman school should have become completely obscured during the last century—a period of heavy coarse eating, and hard drinking, in all classes of society. Compared with the banquets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the repasts of the last century sink into insignificance. At the tables of the early Norman kings profuse quantity was exhibited, and, despite the occasional use of coarse material, the excellence of the cookery throws into the shade the puny efforts of later epochs.

The monasteries were not only the depositories of what little learning had survived the irruption of the barbarians, but served also as culinary libraries. A spirit of magnificent hospitality was maintained, and many instances are given of the generous profusion exhibited by great ecclesiastics. When Ralph, Abbot of Canterbury, was installed in 1309, six thousand persons were entertained, and the dishes served up on that occasion amounted to three thousand. Robert Winchelsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, provided daily victuals for five thousand poor people, and immense crowds of the sick and infirm, who were unable to attend at his gate, were supplied with necessaries at their own houses. With the sympathetic feeling of true "bons vivants" the churchmen of the day did not forget their own repasts, and the magnitude and portentous length of these entertainments gave rise to the following anecdote:

"An Italian, having a suite here in England to the archbishoppe of Yorke, that then was, and commynge to Yorke, when one of the prebendaries there brake his breade, as they terme it, and thereupon made a solemne longe diner, the which

perhaps began at eleven and continued well nigh till fower in the afternoone, at the whiche diner this bishoppe was. It fortuneth that as they were sette the Italian knockt at the gate, unto whom the porter, perceiving his errand, answered that my lord bishoppe was at diner. The Italian departed and returned betwixte twelve and one; the porter answered, they were yet at diner. He came again at two of the clock; the porter told hym they had not half dined. He came at three a clocke, unto whom the porter in a heat answered never a worde, but churlishlie did shutte the gates upon hym. Whereupon others told the Italian that ther was no speaking with my lord almoste all that daie for the solemne diner sake. The gentilman Italian, wonderynge much at such a long sitting, and greatly greved because he could not then speake with the archbysshoppe's grace, departed straight towards London; and leavyng the dispatch of his matters with a dere frende of his, toke his journey towards Italie. Three yeres after, it happened that an Englishman came to Rome, with whom this Italian by chaunce fallyng acquainted, asked hym if he knewe the archbysshoppe of Yorke. The Englishman said, he knewe hym right well. 'I praye you tell me,' quoth the Italian, 'hath that archbysshoppe yet dined?'

In the days of chivalry it was a costly business to ask a few friends to dinner. They were not content to eat and drink at the expense of the host, but fully expected—if the banquet partook of a ceremonial character—to carry away something more negotiable than a headache or an indigestion. They looked forward with a keen financial appetite to gifts of silver vessels, falcons, coats of mail, goodly horses, "certain gemmes, by curious art sette in gold; of purple and cloth-of-gold for men's apparell." Imagine a dinner-party of the present day at which cups and covers, weight-carrying hunters, bracelets and bangles should be distributed between the courses, and from which no guest should be permitted to depart until he had accepted sufficient cloth to make him a new suit! Ancient banquets were not only expensive but cumbersome. Many inconvenient ceremonies contributed to lengthen the hours consecrated to gastronomy. Certain dishes were brought in by a regular procession, the boar's head by a deputation of domestics, and the peacock by a contingent of fair dames. The peacock was styled "the food of lovers and the meat of lords."

It was roasted and served up whole, covered after dressing with the skin and feathers, the comb entire, and the tail spread. Sometimes the noble bird was covered with gold leaf instead of its feathers, but the prevailing taste appears to have been in favour of the peacock in full plumage. This triumph of culinary decoration was achieved in this wise:

"At a feeste roiall pecokkes shall be dight on this manner. Take and flece off the skynne with the fedurs, tayle and nekke, and the hed thereon; then take the skyn with all the fedurs, and lay hit on a table abroad; and strawe thereon grounden comyn; then take the pecokke and roste hym, and endore hym with rawe zolkes of egges; and when he is rosted, take hym of, and let hym coole awhile, and take and sowe hym in his skyn, and gilde his combe, and so serve hym forthe with the last cours."

Edward the Third dispensed a romantic hospitality, wherein eating and drinking, tournaments and love-making, were agreeably mingled; but it was under the reign of his immediate successor, Richard the Second, that the magnificent prodigality of royal entertainments rose to its greatest height. The cost of these banquets was enormous, and the salaries of the cooks—if they were ever paid—must have greatly helped to lighten the royal coffers. Two thousand cooks and three hundred servitors were required to dress food for, and wait upon, the ten thousand visitors who daily attended the court. To furnish food for this almost incredible number of guests, twenty-eight oxen, three hundred sheep, myriads of fowls, and immense quantities of game, were immolated daily.

Richard the Second was not only a magnificent host, but a true epicure, and it was during his reign that the celebrated *Forme of Cury* was compiled by his master cooks, A.D. 1390. This curious vellum roll contained one hundred and ninety-six formulæ for the concoction of the dishes most in favour towards the close of the fourteenth century. Apparently the master cooks were not the sole authors of this curious work, as it was compiled by "assent and avysement of maisters of phisik and of philosophie," who dwelt in the court of King Richard. "First it techith a man for to make commune pottages, and commune meetis for howshold as they shold be made, craftly and holsonly. Aftirward it techith for to make curious potages, and meetes, and sotiltees for alle maner of states, both hye

and lowe." The roll is preceded by a table of contents to "teche a man withoute taryng to fynd what meete that hym lust for to have."

The enduring qualities of certain popular French dishes is clearly demonstrated by the *Forme of Cury*. Our Gallic neighbours have proved the conservative nature of their instincts by retaining even unto this day their fondness for cabbage-soup. The ancient recipe stands thus:

"Caboches (cabbages) in potage.—Take caboches and quarter hem, and seeth hem in gode broth with oynonns y mynced and the whyte of lekes y slyt and corve (cut) smale and do thereto saffron and salt and force it with powder douce (allspice)."

Barring the saffron—a pestilent ingredient of mediæval cookery—this recipe differs but little from those now in use.

Rabbits and chickens were treated in this wise:

"Connynges (rabbits) in gravey.—Take connynges, smite hem to pecys. Parboile hem, and drawe hem with a gode broth, with almandes blanchèd and brayed. Do (put) thereinne sugar and powder gynger and boyle it, and the flessch therewith. Floor it with sugar, and with powder gynger, and serve forth."

Rabbits were also converted into a dish called:

"Egurdouce (aigre-doux, sour-sweet).—Take connynges or kydde, and smyte hem on pecys rawe, and frye hem in white grece. Take raysons of corrance (currants), and frye hem, take oynonns, parboile hem, and hewe hem smale, and frye hem; take red wyne, sugar with powder of pepor, of gynger of canel (cinnamon), salt and cast thereto, and let it seeth with a gode quantite of white grece, and serve it forth."

This dish was probably called sour-sweet from there being no trace of anything sour in its composition. Most of the recipes in the *Forme of Cury* recommend the use of sugar and ginger, where those condiments would be suppressed by Monsieur Gouffé.

Hoche-pot, or hotch-potch, had also its mediæval representative:

"Gees in hoggepot.—Take gees and smyte hem on pecys. Cast hem in a pot; do thereto half wyne and half water; and do thereto a gode quantite of oynonns and erbest (herbs). Set it over the fyre, and cover it fast. Make a layor (mixture) of brede and blode, and lay it therewith. Do thereto powder fort (a mix-

ture of the stronger spices), and serve it fort."

The digestive organs of our ancestors were probably equal to the task imposed upon them by stewed goose—apparently a powerful dish—but many of the preparations recommended by King Richard's cook are exceedingly delicate, as, for instance, "blank-mang," a very different dish to the opaque kind of jelly now served under the name of blanc-mange:

"Blank-mang.—Take capons and seeth hem, thenne take hem up. Take almandes blanchèd. Grynd hem, and alay (mix) hem up with the same broth. Cast the mylk in a pot. Waisshe rys and do thereto, and let it seeth. Thanne take brawne of caponns, teere it small and do thereto. Take white grece, sugar, and salt, and cast thereinne. Lat it seeth. Then messe it forth and florish (garnish) it with aneys in confyt rede, other whyte (aniseed confectioned, red or white), and with almandes fryed in oyle, and serve it forth."

Dishes of this nature explain the enormous consumption of raw material in mediæval kitchens, and also throw a light upon the cause of the impecuniosity of the Plantagenet kings. It is worthy of note that the confection of "purées" of vegetables was not unknown in the days of Wat Tyler. "Peerey of peson" is simply Norman English for a purée de pois, or green pea soup, a dish not unknown to the banquets of to-day. The Crusades had added to sauces of Western Europe that known as:

"Sawse Sarzyne (Saracen sauce).—Take heppes (hips) and make hem clene. Take almandes blanchèd. Fry hem in oyle, and bray hem in a mortar with heppes. Drawe it up with rede wyne, and do thereinne sugar ynowhg (enough) with powder fort. Lat it be stondyng (stiff), and alay it with floor of rys, and color it with alkenot, and messe it forth, and florish (garnish) it with pomegarnet. If thou wilt, in flesshe day, seeth capons, and take the brawn and tesse hem smal and do put thereto, and make the lico (liquor) of this broth."

Cooks of Chaucer's day took small account of capons. They constantly recommend the student to take capons and "smyte hem in pecys," or "hewe hem in gobbets," or tease them small or bray them in a mortar. Almonds also appear to enter largely into the composition of the best dishes. Almonds must have cost a startling price in the fourteenth century, when transit was necessarily slow, difficult, and dan-

gerous. Many of the dishes of "fysse" were highly elaborated. Among others we find a recipe for making salmon into a kind of thick soup or purée, with almonds, milk, and rice-flour. Chysanne was a fish stew scientifically prepared. Laumpreys were served in what was then called galyntyne—a hot preparation very different from the galantine of modern days. The strict observation of fast days accounts for the large space devoted to fish cookery, and for the strange fishes, such as conger, sturgeon, and porpoise, set down in the list of delicacies. The authors of King Richard's cookery-book knew well how to dress "oysters in gravey," to make mussel-broth, and to make "cawdel"—a sort of thick soup—of these shell-fish. They also give sundry recipes for making white and brown sauces for capons, and recommend the roasted and pounded livers of the fowl for making "sawse noyre," surely an excellent plan. We also discover that rissoles and croustades were not unknown to these artists, who give the following recipe for:

"Daryols.—Take creme of cowe, mylke of almandes. Do thereto ayren (eggs) with sugar, saffron, and salt. Meddle it yfere (mix it thoroughly). Do it in a coffyn of two ynche depe, bake it wel, and serve it forth."

It is remarkable that throughout the *Forme of Cury* we find it impossible to discover the slightest trace of plain food. When anything is to be boiled we are told to "seeth it in a gode broth," or a court bouillon made of wine and water. Roasting is only spoken of as a preliminary to some operation of a more complicated description, and broils are not mentioned. Meat roasted and boiled was apparently left to "those of the meaner sort," for so far as we can discover the great lords contented themselves with stews, hashes, and made dishes generally.

A curious roll, which bears the date of 1381, differs but slightly in style of cookery, but much in spelling, from the *Forme of Cury*. This is evidently the work of a philosopher, for the author declares that "cookery is the best medicine." The English of this artist is, however, so peculiar, that we shall only extract one recipe, that for making furmenty, still a favourite Easter dish in the western counties. It will be observed that "nym" in 1381 signified simply "take," and had not yet acquired its later meaning "steal." Shakespeare clearly applies the word to Falstaff's follower in the latter signification.

"For to make furmenty.—Nym clene wete (wheat), and bray it in a mortar well, that the holys (hulls) gon al of and seyt (seeth) yt til yt breste and nym yt up and lat yt kele (cool) and nym fayre fresch broth and swete mylke of almandys or swete mylke of kyne and temper yt al. And nym the yolkys of eyryn (eggs). Boyle it a lityl and set yt adon (down) and messe it forthe wyth fat venyson and fresche moton."

The mention of fresh mutton may provoke a smile, until we recollect that, during the Middle Ages, both sheep and oxen were slaughtered in the autumn and salted for the winter. Stall-feeding was almost unknown, and there is no doubt that the great mass of the population lived upon salted meat, that is to say when they got any meat at all. In the days of cattle-lifting, it was doubtless a great comfort to the owner of lands and beeves to get as many of the latter as possible salted, and safely stowed before the approach of winter.

Even at this early date the art of larding was well known, and is recommended for "crans and herons, pecokys and partrigchis." In the account of the great feast at the enthronisation of the "reverende father in God George Nevell Archbishop of York and Chauncelour of Englande, in the VI yere of the raigne of Kyng Edward the fourth" we find curious evidence of the favour in which strange edibles were then held. Among the goodly provision made for the banquet we find enumerated in addition to one thousand sheep, one hundred and four oxen, three hundred and four "veales" and a like number of "porkes," four hundred swans, six wild bulls, one hundred and four peacocks, two hundred and four cranes, a like number of bittrens, four hundred herons, a thousand egrets, one hundred curlews, and twelve "porposes and seales."

At this sublime feast the "Earle of Warwicke" officiated as steward, and the guests were placed at various tables according to rank. It does not appear, however, that on this great occasion the bills of fare graduated in like proportion as was done at the enthronisation feast of William Warham in 1504.

At all these ceremonial banquets a most important place was filled by "sotiltees." These were curious devices mainly in sugar and pastry, and adorned either with the arms of the host, or with allegorical groups more or less germane to the matter in hand. The lengthy descriptions of these sotiltees



leave no doubt as to the skill of the ancient confectioners, who expended much time and skill in the building of these singular edifices.

That the art of cookery should have declined rapidly in England after the Elizabethan period appears singular, but it is vain to seek in the records of later banquets for the magnificence that distinguished those of an earlier date. Dropping down to the period of the Revolution we find that coarse food had almost entirely supplanted the delicate dishes of the mediæval cooks, and about the reign of the king who was puzzled by an apple dumpling the culinary art sank, as might have been expected, to the lowest depths of degradation. Perhaps this decadence was due in great measure to the coarse tastes of the Georges, of whom the first liked stale oysters, and the last, in spite of his pretended refinement, was a gross feeder, who preferred a shoulder of mutton and onion sauce to the loftiest inspirations of his chef. It would, however, be unfair not to admit that the splendid quality of English meat and vegetables has had much to do with the national indifference to refined cookery. The raw material is so good in itself that it is almost impossible to spoil it. Hence has arisen a barbarous indifference to the culinary art which is often denounced in this country as a mere device for making bad food palatable. Foreign travel, however, is gradually producing a reaction in our national cuisine, and the establishment of a School of Cookery at South Kensington will probably do much to introduce not only economy but elegance to the tables of England.

## WILLING TO DIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE AND THE KEY."

### CHAPTER LXIX. A SEARCH.

THE funeral was over; but the old house of Dorracleugh was not quiet again till the night fell, and the last tenant had swallowed his last draught of beer, and mounted and rode away, through the mist, to his distant farm over the fells.

The moon shone peacefully over mere and fell, and on the time-worn church of Golden Friars, and through the window, on to the grey flags, that lie over Sir Harry Rokestone. Never did she keep sorer watch over the first night of a mortal's sleep in his last narrow bed.

Richard Marston saw this pure light,

and musing, looked from the window. It shone, he thought, over his wide estate. Beyond the mere, all but Clusted, for many a mile, was his own. At this side, away in the direction of distant Haworth, a broad principality of moss and heath, with scattered stretches of thin arable and pasture, ran side by side with the Mardykes estate, magnificent in vastness, if not in rental.

His dreams were not of feudal hospitality and the hearty old-world life. His thoughts were far away from lonely Dorracleugh. Ambition built his castles in the air; but they were nothing very noble. He would subscribe to election funds, place his county influence at the disposal of the minister; spend money on getting and keeping a seat; be found in his place whenever a critical vote was impending; and by force of this, and of his county position, and the old name—for he would take the name of Rokestone, in spite of his uncle's awkward direction about his epitaph, and no one could question his relationship—by dint of all this, with, I dare say, the influence of a rich marriage, he hoped to get on, not from place to place, but what would answer his purpose as well, from title to title. First to revive the baronetage, and then, after some fifteen or twenty years more of faithful service, to become Baron Rokestone, of Dorracleugh.

It was not remorse, then, that kept the usurper's eyes wide open that night. His conscience had no more life in it than the window-stone. It troubled him with no compunction. There was at his heart, on the contrary, a vindictive elation at having defeated, with so much simplicity, the will of his uncle.

Bright rose the sun next morning over Dorracleugh, a sun of good omen. Richard Marston had appointed three o'clock, as the most convenient hour for all members of the conference, for a meeting and a formality. A mere formality, in truth, it was, a search for the will of Sir Harry Rokestone. Mr. Blount had slept at Dorracleugh. Mr. Jarleot, a short, plump man, of five-and-fifty, with a grave face and a bullet head, covered with short, lank, black hair, accompanied by his confidential man, Mr. Spaight, arrived in his gig, just as the punctual clock of Dorracleugh struck three.

Very soon after the old vicar rode up, on his peaceable pony, and came into the drawing-room, where the little party were assembled, with sad, kind face, and gentle, old-fashioned ceremony, with a little pow-

dering of dust in the wrinkles of his clerical costume.

It was with a sense of pleasant satire that Richard Marston had observed old Lemuel Blount ever since he had been assured that the expected will was not forthcoming. Those holy men, how they love an annuity. Not that they like money, of course; that's Mammon; but because it lifts them above earthly cares, and gives them the power of relieving the wants of their fellow-Christians. How slyly the old gentleman had managed it! How thoughtful his appointing himself guardian to the young lady; what endless opportunities his powers over the settlements would present of making handsome terms for himself with an intending bridegroom!

On arriving, in full confidence that the will was safe in its iron repository, Christian could not have looked more comfortable when he enjoyed his famous prospect from the Delectable Mountains. But when it turned out that the will was nowhere to be found, the same Christian, trudging on up the hill of difficulty in his old "burthened fashion," could not have looked more hang-dog and overpowered than he.

His low spirits, his sighs and ejaculations, had amused Richard Marston extremely.

Mr. Blount, having, as I said, heard that the vicar had searched the "safe," and that Mr. Spaight, accompanied by Mr. Marston and the housekeeper, had searched all the drawers, desks, boxes, presses, and other locked-up places in the house, in vain, for any paper having even a resemblance to a will, said, "It is but a form; but as you propose it, be it so."

And now this form was to be complied with.

Mr. Marston told the servant to send Mrs. Shackleton with the keys.

Mr. Marston led the way, and the four other gentlemen followed, attended by the housekeeper.

There was not much talking; a clatter of feet on uncarpeted floors, the tiny jingle of small keys, opening of doors, and clapping of lids, and now and then Mrs. Shackleton's hard treble was heard in answer to an interrogatory.

This went on for more than twenty minutes up-stairs, and then the exploring party came down again, Richard Marston talking to the vicar, Mr. Blount to Mr. Spaight, and Mr. Jarlcot, the attorney, listening to Mrs. Shackleton, the housekeeper.

Richard Marston led the party to Sir Harry's room.

The carpet was still on the floor, the curtains hanging still, in gloomy folds, to the ground. Sir Harry's hat and stick lay on the small round table, where he had carelessly thrown them when he came in from his last walk about Dorracleugh, his slippers lay on the hearth-rug before his easy-chair, his pipe was on the mantel-piece.

The party stood in this long and rather gloomy room in straggling disarray, still talking.

"There's Pixie," said old Mr. Spaight, who had been a bit of a sportsman, and loved coursing in his youth, as he stopped before a portrait of a greyhound. "Sir Harry's dog; fine dog, Pixie, won the cup twice on Doppleton Lea thirty-two years ago." But this was a murmured meditation, for he was a staid man of business now, and his liking for dogs and horses was incongruous, and no one in the room heard him. Mr. Jarlcot's voice recalled him.

"Mr. Marston was speaking to you, Mr. Spaight."

"Oh! I was just saying I think nothing could have been more careful," said Mr. Marston, "than the search you made upstairs, in presence of me and Mrs. Shackleton, on Thursday last?"

"No, sir; certainly nothing; it could not possibly have escaped us," answered Mr. Spaight.

"And that is your opinion also?" asked Mr. Jarlcot of Richard Marston.

"Clearly," he answered.

"I'll make a note of that if you allow me," said Mr. Jarlcot; and he made an entry, with Mr. Marston's concurrence, in his pocket-book.

"And now about this," said Mr. Jarlcot, with a clumsy bow to Mr. Marston, and touching the door of the safe with his open hand.

"You have got the key, sir?" said Marston to the good vicar with silver hair, who stood meekly by, distraught and melancholy, an effigy of saintly contemplation.

"Oh, yes," said the vicar, wakening up. "Yes; the key, but — but, you know, there's nothing there."

He moved the key vaguely about as he looked from one to the other, as if inviting any one who pleased to try.

"I think, sir, perhaps it will be as well if you will kindly open it yourself," said Marston.

"Yes, surely; I suppose so; with all my heart," said the vicar.

The door of the safe opened easily, and displayed the black iron void, into which all looked.

Of course no one was surprised. But Mr. Blount shook his head, lifted up his hands, and groaned audibly, "I am very sorry."

Mr. Marston affected not to hear him.

#### CHAPTER LIX. A FIND.

"I THINK," said Mr. Jarlcot, "it will be desirable that I should take a note of any information which Mr. Marston and the vicar may be so good as to supply with respect to the former search in the same place. I think, sir," he continued, addressing the vicar, "you mentioned that the deceased Sir Harry Rokestone placed that key in your charge on the evening of his departure from this house for London?"

"So it was, sir," said the vicar.

"Was it out of your possession for any time?"

"For about three quarters of an hour. I handed it Mr. Marston on his way to this house; but as I was making a sick call near this, I started not many minutes after he left me, and on the way it struck me that I might as well have back the key. I arrived here, I believe, almost as soon as he, and he quite agreed with me that I had better get the key back again into——"

"Into your own custody," interposed Marston. "You may recollect that it was I who suggested it the moment you came."

"And the key was not out of your possession, Mr. Marston, during the interval?" said Mr. Jarlcot.

"Not for one moment," answered Richard Marston, promptly.

"And you did not, I think you mentioned, open that safe?"

"Certainly not. I made no use whatever of that key at any time. I never saw that safe open until the vicar opened it in my presence, and we both saw that it contained nothing; so did Mrs. Shackleton. And, I think, we can all—I know I can, to my part—depose, on oath, to the statements we have made."

Mr. Jarlcot raised his eyebrows solemnly, slowly shook his head, and, having replaced his note-book in his pocket, drew a long breath in, through his rounded lips, with a sound that almost amounted to a whistle.

"Nothing can be more distinct; it amounts to demonstration," he said, rais-

ing his head, putting his hands into his trousers-pockets, and looking slowly round the cornice. "Haven't you something to say?" he added, laying his hand gently on Mr. Blount's arm, and then turning a step or two away, and Marston, who could not comprehend what he fancied to be an almost affected disappointment at the failure to discover a will, thought he saw his eyes wander, when he thought no one was looking, curiously to the grate and the hobs; perhaps in search, as he suspected, of paper ashes.

"I am deeply sorry," exclaimed Mr. Blount, throwing himself into a chair in undisguised despondency. "The will, as it was drafted, would have provided splendidly for Miss Ethel Ware, and left you, Mr. Marston, an annuity of two thousand five hundred a year, and a sum of five thousand pounds. For two or three years I had been urging him to execute it; it is evident he never did. He has destroyed the draft, instead of executing it. That hope is quite gone—totally." Mr. Blount stood up and said, laying his hand upon his forehead, "I am grieved; I am shocked; I am profoundly grieved."

Mr. Marston was strongly tempted to tell Mr. Blount what he thought of him. Jarlcot and he, no doubt, understood one another, and had intended making a nice thing of it.

He could not smile, or even sneer, just then, but Mr. Marston fixed on Lemuel Blount a sidelong look of the sternest contempt.

"There is, then," said Mr. Blount, collecting himself, "no will."

"That seems pretty clear," said Mr. Marston, with, in spite of himself, a cold scorn in his tone. "I think so; and I rather fancy you think so too."

"Except this," continued Mr. Blount, producing a paper from his pocket, at which he had been fumbling. "Mr. Jarlcot will hand you a copy. I urged him, God knows how earnestly, to revoke it. It was made at the period of his greatest displeasure with you; it leaves everything to Miss Ethel Ware, and gives you, I grieve to say, an annuity of but four hundred a year. It appoints me guardian to the young lady, in the same terms that the latter will would have done, and leaves me, beside, an annuity of five hundred a year, half of which I shall, if you don't object, make over to you."

"Oh! oh! a will? That's all right," said Marston, trying to smile with lips that

had grown white. "I, of course, you—we all wish nothing but what is right and fair."

Mr. Jarlcot handed him a new neatly-folded paper, endorsed "Copy of the will of the late Sir Harry Rokestone, Baronet." Richard Marston took it with a hand that trembled—a hand that had not often trembled before.

"Then, I suppose, Mr. Blount, you will look in on me, by-and-bye, to arrange about the steps to be taken about proving it," said Mr. Jarlcot.

"It's all right, I dare say," said Mr. Marston, vaguely, looking from man to man uncertainly. "I expected a will, of course; I don't suppose I have a friend among you, gentlemen, why should I? I am sure I have some enemies. I don't know what country attorneys and nincompoops, and Golden Friars' bumpkins may think of it, but I know what the world will think, that I'm swindled by a d—d conspiracy, and that that old man, who's in his grave, has behaved like a villain."

"Oh, Mr. Marston, your dead uncle," said the good vicar, lifting his hand in deprecation, with gentle horror. "You wouldn't, you can't."

"What the devil is it to you, sir?" cried Marston, with a look as if he could have struck him. "I say it's all influence, and juggling; I'm not such a simpleton. No one expected, of course, that opportunities like those should not have been improved. The thing's transparent. I wish you joy, Mr. Blount, of your five hundred a year, and you, Mr. Jarlcot, of your approaching management of the estates and the money; if you fancy a will like that, turning his own nephew adrift on the world in favour of Methodists and attorneys, and a girl he never saw till the other day, is to pass unchallenged, you're very much mistaken; it's just the thing that always happens when an old man like that dies; there's a will of course—every one understands it. I'll have you all where you won't like."

Mrs. Shackleton, with her mouth pursed, her nose high in air, and her brows knit over a vivid pair of eyes, was the only one of the group who seemed ready to explode

in reply; Mr. Blount looked simply shocked and confounded; the vicar maintained his bewildered and appealing stare; Mr. Spaight's eyebrows were elevated above his spectacles, and his mouth opened, as he leaned forward his long nose; Mr. Jarlcot's brow looked thunderous and a little flushed; all were staring for some seconds in silence on Mr. Marston, whose concluding sentences had risen almost to a shriek, with a laugh running through it.

"I think, Mr. Marston," said Jarlcot, after a couple of efforts, "you would do well to—to consider a little the bearing of your language; I don't think you can quite see its force."

"I wish you could; I mean it; and you shall feel it too. You shall hear of me sooner than you all think. I'm not a fellow to be pigeoned so simply."

With these words, he walked into the hall, and a few moments after they heard the door shut with a violent clang.

A solemn silence reigned in the room for a little time; these peaceable people seemed stunned by the explosion.

"Evasit, erapit," murmured the vicar, sadly, raising his hands, and shaking his head. "How very painful!"

"I don't wonder. I make great allowances," said Mr. Blount. "I have been very unhappy myself, ever since it was ascertained that he had not executed the new will. I am afraid the young man will never consent to accept a part of my annuity—he is so spirited."

"Don't be uneasy on that point," said Mr. Jarlcot; "if you lodge it, he'll draw it; not—but I think—you might do better—with your money."

There was something in the tone, undefinable, that prompted a dark curiosity.

Mr. Blount turned on him a quick look of inquiry. Mr. Jarlcot lowered his eyes, and turned them then to the window, and remarked that the summer was making a long stay this year.

Mr. Blount looked down and slowly rubbed his forehead, thinking, and sighed deeply, and he said, "It's a wonderful world, this; may the Lord have mercy on us all."